

South Dakota Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Application Guide

Applications Due

May 2, 2016

Applications must be sent electronically or postmarked on or before the above date

Preferred Application Submissions are electronic via email to: bob.veyrich@state.sd.us

Alternatively you may submit one original and four (4) copies of the Application to:

South Dakota Department of Agriculture
Nina Fromm
Specialty Crops Block Grant Program
523 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

South Dakota Department of Agriculture Contact:

Bob Weyrich,
Bob.veyrich@state.sd.us
Western Ag Development Office
Rapid City SD
(605) 431-8002

Background

The 2008 Farm Bill established the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB) to provide grants to states to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. South Dakota was allocated approximately \$270,000 for 2016

Individual Grant Amounts

Past grants have ranged from \$2,100 - \$49,395. The average size of grants awarded is FY15 was \$28,281

Grant Eligibility

Proposals will be accepted from non-profit organizations, producer organizations, government agencies, universities, individuals and other organizations related to South Dakota's specialty crops industry. All projects must have a very strong information dissemination and outreach component where results from the project are shared with others and that others may benefit from the project. Projects that benefit one grower, individual or product will not be funded.

DUNS Number

All recipients of SCBGP funds must have a DUNS number. Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) provides a DUNS Number, a unique nine digit identification number, for each physical location of your business. DUNS Number assignment is FREE for all businesses required to register with the US Federal government for contracts or grants. DUNS numbers may be obtained by visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp> or calling 1-866-705-5711.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. A list of examples of qualifying specialty crops can be found at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateJ&navID=WhatareSp>

Projects must solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide information on how Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funds will solely enhance specialty crops. In the event that a project benefits other ineligible commodities, the applicant is required, in their application, to describe how they will ensure that funding is being used to “only” enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. The description may include the estimated percentage of the project that specifically benefits specialty crops as well as how project staff will use matching funds for the portion that does not. The applicant must maintain adequate documentation to show that the SCBGP-FB funding only enhances eligible specialty crop.

Examples of “enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops” includes, but is not limited to:

- Consolidated marketing efforts that focus on increased sales
- increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops
- improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems
- assisting all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain in developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers and processors
- investing in specialty crop research, including organic research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes
- developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops
- pest and disease control; and
- development of organic and sustainable production practices

Also, unless you are exempt (in the previous tax year, you had gross income, from all sources, under \$300,000), all grantees of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program will be required to report on <http://www.fvgrntprg.gov> each first-tier sub-award to an entity that obligates \$25,000 or more in federal funds. Entity is defined as: 1) a Governmental organization, which is a State, local government, or Indian tribe; 2) a foreign public entity; 3) a domestic or foreign nonprofit organization; 4) a domestic or foreign for-profit organization; and 5) a Federal agency, but only as a subrecipient under an award or subaward to a non-Federal entity.

South Dakota Priorities

Based on outreach conducted with the industry, the following areas are priorities for South Dakota’s SCBGP. Additional points will be awarded in the review process for projects that address one of these priority areas.

- Increased sales (required for marketing projects)
- Increased consumption
- Sustainable practices of specialty crop production

Funding Allocation

Requests for reimbursements will be accepted on a quarterly basis. Each reimbursement request must include an itemized invoice, a brief interim progress report and documentation of the work or expenses for which payment is requested. Itemization shall include the purpose, amount and date incurred.

To receive reimbursement, grantees must provide assurance that the work has been completed (i.e. include receipts, invoices) and clearly outline expenditures. Twenty five percent of the total grant funds will be retained until receipt of the complete final report including receipts for all expenditures.

Only expenses incurred after signing an agreement with SDDA will be eligible for reimbursement. A general guideline for a fully executed agreement is three months after the application due date.

The Program will NOT fund the following expenses:

- paying off existing debt
- substituting existing efforts or research already funded
- capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, land or buildings
- business entertainment or business gifts
- lobbying or political efforts
- indirect or administrative costs

Funds awarded for projects may be spent over three years. This does not guarantee that a sub-grantee will be awarded a new grant for 3 years, but that the allocated 1st year grant money can be used over 3 years.

Non-Performance

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture will retain the right to assess project performance including project activity or scope and intermediate or final reporting on a timely basis and shall seek to recapture funds for projects that have failed to perform according to project proposal or cooperative agreement obligations.

Grant Proposal Review and Selection

Grant applications will be assessed by a technical review committee of South Dakota Department of Agriculture staff and representatives from relevant entities. The review committee will make final recommendations to the South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture.

Project Reporting

All reporting must be submitted to the South Dakota Department of Agriculture electronically.

Interim Reports will be due annually after project initiation. Annual reports will include information on activities performed, problems and delays, future project plans and funding expended to date.

A final report will be due 30 days after project completion. Final reports will include information on project summary, project approach, goals and outcomes achieved, beneficiaries and lessons learned.

Timeliness of past reporting will be taken into consideration during review and scoring of any future project applications. (see also "Non-Performance" paragraph)

Definitions

Beginning Farmer or Rancher means an individual or entity who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A "Socially Disadvantaged Group" is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.